IELTS

SPEAKING SAMPLES

PART 1 & 2

FORECAST

from January to May

ZIM

By members of Academic Department at ZIM IELTS Institute

ZIM
Luyện thi IELTS cam kết đầu ra

27 IELTS SPEAKING

PART 1 TOPICS

FROM JANUARY TO MAY 2018

TOPIC 1: Home/ Accommodation

1. **What kind of housing/accommodation do you live in?**

I live in a tiny apartment on Yen Lang street 6 days a week. Every Sunday I go back to my parents' house on the outskirts of Hanoi.

2. **Who do you live with?**

I live with one of my coworkers, who was also my college friend. We share the rent and other expenses like electricity and water, so it's not really expensive.

3. **How long have you lived there?**

I've been living here since 2016, so it's 2 years more or less although I did spend 6 months living in HCM city. I thought about moving somewhere else, but living here is pretty great and fun. Besides it's really close to my office.

4. **What's the difference between where you are living now and where you have lived in the past?**

There're quite a few differences. My parents' house is huge with separate rooms, each of which has its own bathroom so it's really convenient and private. However, my apartment right now is much smaller and I have to share a bathroom with my roomate.

5. **Do you plan to live there for a long time?**

That was never my plan. Two years ago I decided to rent a room here because my house was too far and it took me forever to get to my office. But I only stay here for maybe 1 or 2 years more before I can afford a house of my own.

6. **Which room does your family spend most of the time in?**

Probably the kitchen where we eat together. Unlike other families in town, we don't watch TV very often, at least I don't watch TV so we never sit together in the living room. Dinner is the only time of day that we all sit together and enjoy our meals.

7. **Are the public transport facilities to your home very good?**

Not even slightly! The bus stations are always crowded with people who are really inappropriate and always talking out loud. The floors are so dirty that I don't even want to step

inside a station.

8. Do you prefer living in a house or a flat?

Each type has some things to offer me but I would have to go for a house. There's usually more space, and the water supply is much more reliable.

9. What part of your home do you like the most?

My room. It's big to begin with. There's a bookshelf attached to the wall which is my favourite spot for reading. And you know what's best? The bathroom. I have my own bathroom in my own room.

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TOPIC 2: Study

1. **Describe your education.**

I had my first 5 years at a local primary school on the outskirts of Hanoi, then I was sent to a school in the center of the city which was very far from my house. I went to college to get my degree in Environmental Science a few years ago.

2. **What is your area of specialization?**

I'm now a freshman at The University of Hanoi, studying environmental engineering. My parents tried to persuade me into pursuing Teacher Education at first but I decided not to.

3. **Why did you choose to study that major?**

I've always been into environmental issues, and it's my dream to receive the Nobel prize in this field. Studying this major is a stepping stone to fulfilling my ambition.

4. **Do you like your major?**

Absolutely yes. I get to study what I like and I know that I can apply my knowledge into helping the environment. Studying has never felt so good!

5. **What kind of school did you go to as a child?**

I didn't go to school when I was small, I was homeschooled by my mother. My parents were not financially adequate to afford my study.

6. **What was your favorite subject as a child?**

Math, definitely Math. I loved it when I could solve a difficult equation, much like an achievement to myself.

7. **Do you think your country has an effective education system?**

I don't think so. Looking at the astonishing dropout rate in Vietnam you can partly tell how challenging and frustrating studying in Vietnam can be. We are in desperate need for change.

8. **Are you looking forward to working?**

Not really. To graduate and get a job means that I'll be under great financial pressure since I cannot rely on my parents' support anymore. To be honest, I don't think I can even graduate, let alone finding a job

TOPIC 3: Work

1. **What do you do?**

I now work as a scientist at the National Laboratory. I used to be a professor in the University of Hanoi but I changed my profession 5 years ago.

2. **What are your responsibilities?**

I'm responsible for discovering and analyzing new chemicals. My job can be demanding and frustrating at times, but it is really rewarding. My work can save lives of thousands.

3. **Why did you choose to do that type of work (or, that job)?**

Even though working on new elements can be pretty dangerous, I just cannot quit my job. I have always been interested in science and chemistry ever since I was I child, so doing this job is really pleasing.

4. **Are there some other kinds of work you would rather do?**

Not really. But if I have to choose, I would go back to my former job – being a professor. Even though I didn't earn much from being a professor, knowing that my lessons can help students achieve their goals is priceless.

5. **Describe the company or organization you work for**

I now work for the National laboratory, which is located in the city center, just about a mile from my house. My lab is on the 6^{th} floor of the building.

6. **Do you enjoy your work?**

Most of the time, yes, I do enjoy my work. When I first came here I didn't like it much. I felt like I couldn't fit in, but now that I'm used to my work, things are much easier.

7. **What do you like about your job?**

I like my job a lot, knowing that the result of my research can save lives. If I and my colleagues succeed, we'll find a cure for brain cancer.

8. **What do you dislike about your job?**

I don't like the environment, to be frank. I mean, I like my coworkers but our safety is never ensured. Even though there are regulations, you never know what can happen in a lab.

9. Do you miss being a student?

No I don’t. I didn’t have great memories with schools and teachers. I’m glad that I graduated and got to do the kind of work I like.

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TOPIC 4: Newspapers and magazines

1. **Do you often read newspapers?**

I do, I usually read news after I get home in the evening. I used to buy printed newspapers but now I have a habit of reading online newspapers since it's much more convenient.

2. **Do you prefer to read local news or international news?**

I don't really favor one over another. I will read whatever I'm interested in, regardless of whether they are local or international.

3. **Which is more popular where you live, newspapers or magazines?**

It depends. People around my parents age tend to prefer newspapers, while magazines seem to be more appealing to the young.

4. **Do many people today read newspapers?**

I don't know, really. I think people who need to get updated of the latest news or trend will have to read newspapers a lot.

5. **In the future, do you think more people than today will read magazines, or fewer people?**

I myself don't think I'll read magazines much in the future since newspapers are much more convenient.

6. **Do you think newspapers will be very important to you in the future?**

Definitely, I always want to be informed of events around me so I'll have to rely on newspapers for information.

TOPIC 5: Birds

1. **How do you feel about birds?**

I think they are adorable, but their singing can be annoying at times. I know people who are absolutely obsessed with birds. My uncle is an example, listening to birds singing is his hobby since it makes him feel relaxed

2. **How do Vietnamese people feel about birds?**

It depends, to some people, birds are like dear pets but to others birds are more like food.

3. **Are there many birds near your home?**

Birds near my house? I don't think so. I live in an apartment, it's on the 9th floor of a building in the city center. I rarely see birds around.

4. **Have you seen many different kinds of birds?**

Like I said before, I rarely see birds. My uncle took me on several bird watching trips but I never grew fond of them. I don't know much about birds and I don't think I'll ever bother to find out more about them.

TOPIC 6: Email

1. **Do you like to write a letter or email?**

I do. I have relatives and friends who live far away so I cannot have face-to-face conversations with those people, letters and emails help me keep in touch with them.

2. **Do you think emails are useful?**

Absolutely. Instead of having to go meet people in person to get things done, I can just simply send emails. Things have been much easier since the advent of emails.

3. **What sorts of letters (or emails) do you think are the most difficult to write?**

The formal ones I think, like CV and the alike. Since there is a long list of regulations that you have to follow, not to mention the differences between cultures. What you write maybe acceptable in a country but can be considered rude in another.

4. **Do you prefer to write letters or emails? Why?**

Definitely emails. Writing a letter can be very expensive and time-consuming. You'll have to wait about 2 weeks for your letter to reach your friend, and another 2 weeks to receive his/her reply. Just thinking about it is frustrating enough.

5. **Do you think email might one day replace handwritten letters?**

I do think so, yes, emails will replace handwritten letters someday. As I said before, writing letters can be really annoying, while writing an email is much more convenient.

TOPIC 7: Parks & Trees Parks

1. **Do you like going to parks and/or public gardens?**

I do, having a walk in the park can be relaxing at times. As much as I want to, I never have time to go to parks.

2. **When was the last time you went to a park?**

I'm not quite sure. Almost a year I think, my brother usually exercised with his friends there, I was reluctant, but he forced me since I always stayed indoor.

3. **Do you think the parks and the gardens where you live could be improved in any way?**

Yes, I think parks now are not as appealing to people as they used to be. Park managers should really consider working on some new attractions like a playground for children, I think?

4. **Would you like to see more parks and gardens in your home town?**

Of course, I never had a chance to go to many parks and the environment is always polluted. I really hope the younger generations will be more fortunate.

5. **Do you prefer to relax with your friends in a park or an indoor space?**

I'll have to choose indoor space much as I like parks. Hanging out with friends in a park means that we'll have to rely on the weather, while in a building, weather wouldn't be a problem anymore.

TOPIC 8: Trees

1. **Do you like trees?**

I do! Planting trees is my habit and I always go to the park whenever I have free time.

2. **Do you like (to go to) the forest (or, a forest)?**

Much as I like trees, I don't really enjoy going to the forest. Walking in the forest can be scary since I'm terrified of insects.

3. **Is there a forest near your hometown?**

No, my hometown is close to a beach actually. I prefer the sea to forests so I'm happy with that.

4. **Would you like to live in a place that has lots of trees?**

To be frank, though I like trees, I'm not that fascinated about being surrounded by trees all the time. I despise insects so I don't think I could survive there.

5. **Where can one find trees (or forests) in your country?**

You can find trees almost everywhere. Parks are an option, or you can visit the old streets in Hanoi to find old trees.

TOPIC 9: Text messages

1. **Do you text someone if he doesn't answer your phone?**

Sometimes. It depends on the situation. If I really need him to call me back immediately, I'll leave him a message asking him to do so. But most of the time, I just wait for him to call me back.

2. **Is there any occasion when texting someone is better than calling him?**

Maybe he is in the middle of something important, like a meeting, and you know it, it's better to just send a message. Calling him in such occasions is inappropriate and he can get annoyed and angry.

3. **Have you ever had difficulty replying?**

No I haven't. I'm using an iPhone, which is very user-friendly and I can send my message really fast.

4. **How often do you send text messages?**

All the time. I personally don't prefer calling people because sometimes when they cannot answer my call, it will be very rude. Instead, I always send a message, or if I want to talk to someone, I'll text him first before making the call.

TOPIC 10: Patience

1. **What do you think "patience" is?**

Well patience is a quality that means you are able to spend a lot of time doing something difficult, even if it means you have to do it over and over again.

2. **Do you think patience is important?**

Yes absolutely. If you want to be successful, patience is the number one factor. For example, when teaching children, you really need to be patient in order to teach them because they are usually very energetic and not willing to listen easily.

3. **Do you think being patient is an important part of being polite?**

Yes, being polite means that you avoid hurting someone else's feelings. Sometimes it takes a lot of patience to have a conversation with a person who is talkative. If you are not patient, you can end up being rude and offending the other person.

4. **Would you say you are a patient person?**

I'm a teacher, and being patient is part of what I do everyday. So yeah I can say with confidence that I am a patient person.

5. **Have you ever lost your patience?**

There've been a few times when my students were too naughty and didn't do their homework. One time, I just lost it and gave the whole class detension.

TOPIC 11: Daily routine

1. **What is the busiest part of the day for you?**

It's the evening. All of my English classes are in the evening, 7 days a week. In the morning and the afternoon, I just spend my time relaxing by going to the gym or playing computer games.

2. **What part of your day do you like best?**

Probably the morning. I do exercise regularly in my room when the sun rises, and sometimes I go to the gym. What's best about the morning is coffee time. I just love it because coffee keeps me active all day long.

3. **Do you usually have the same routine everyday?**

Pretty much yeah, although there's a slight change on Sunday. I usually wake up really late on Sunday and I don't have any coffee either. I just want to spend my weekend in my warm bed.

4. **What is your daily routine?**

I'm an early riser so I wake up at around 6 o'clock, then I have a cup of coffee 30 minutes after that before I go to the gym. I stay at home for pretty much the whole afternoon and I teach English classes in the evening.

5. **Have you ever changed your routine?**

I haven't found any reasons to do so. Maybe in the future I will, because honestly I don't like working for 7 evenings straight.

6. **Do you think it is important to have a daily routine?**

It's not something that a person can't live without I think. It's important to me but it doesn't mean that everyone should follow a routine everyday. It's fun to have changes once in a while.

7. **What would you like to change in your day to day routine?**

Well if I can, I want to cancel 1 or 2 classes in the evening because I really could use some nights to go around the city. Working 7 days a week is not a great idea.

TOPIC 12: Films

1. **Do you like to watch films?**

I really do but I wish I have more time for it. I've been very busy recently due to my job so I only have time for one or two new movies each month.

2. **Do you prefer foreign films or Vietnamese films?**

I enjoy both of them as long as they convey meaningful messages. But if I have to choose between those two, I will probably go with foreign films, especially Hollywood films because most of them are well-acted, with lots of celebrities and good effects.

3. **How often do you go to a cinema to watch a movie?**

Not very often actually. I used to go there at least once a month but now I have lots of things to worry about so I rather focus on my work and just choose a movie to watch at home.

4. **Do Vietnamese people like to go to a cinema to watch a film?**

It's kind of hard to say but I think the young generation enjoys it more. People around my parents age tend to stay at home and watch TV.

5. **What kinds of movies do you like best?**

As for me, I like sci-fi movies the best because they usually have fascinating story lines and a lot of thrilling action scenes. Also, because I study in the science field so I always find this kind of films interesting.

6. **What was the first film that you watched?**

Titanic was the first movie that I saw in the cinema. It has been quite a while but the movie was so good that I can remember all the details until now.

TOPIC 13: Mathematics

1. When did you start learning math?

Math is an official subject for Vietnamese students since first grade so I have studied Math for at least 16 years.

2. **Do you like math?**

Math is actually not my strongest suit. I prefer Chemistry and Biology. In fact, in high school I was in the National Biology Olympic team but all science subjects involve using Math so it still plays a crucial part in my study.

3. **Who's your favorite teacher so far?**

I was very lucky to have a lot of experienced and supportive teachers in my life so it's really hard for me to say who is my favorite. I am grateful to all of them. Each of them had certain influence on different stages of my life.

4. **Is math difficult for you to learn?**

It certainly is but I enjoy the challenging nature of Math. Even though it's hard, studying Math will benefit you in many ways.

5. **Do you like to use a calculator?**

Calculators are indeed one of the greatest inventions of human kind in my opinion. It has helped me a lot when dealing with complex equations and advance mathematic problems.

TOPIC 14: Social network

1. **What kinds of social networking websites do you like to use?**

I believe the most common and also the most famous one that young people like to use nowadays is Facebook. I, myself, use Facebook everyday as a means of communication with my friends and updating news.

2. **Are you a social person?**

I see myself as an extrovert. I really enjoying making new friends and taking part in social activities.

3. **What kinds of people do you like to be friends with on those websites?**

I rarely accept stranger's friend request to be honest. I prefer getting to know someone in person, rather than making friends based on what they display on the Internet.

4. **Is it easy to find real friends on a social networking website?**

I personally don't think so. There're a lot of people with different purposes on the Internet. You can't always be sure if they have good intention with you or not.

5. **What kinds of chatting app or software do Vietnamese people like to use?**

There're plenty of them but I guess Zalo and Skype are the most common among all. It's very easy to use and very convenient, even old people can get used to them quickly.

TOPIC 15: Museums

1. **Are there many museums in your country?**

There are! Museums in Vietnam are quite diverse, and they cover almost every field, namely the War Remnants Museum, the Fine Art Museum and plenty more. However, museums are not so appealing to the young, which is unfortunate, they could have been much more educational.

2. **Do you think museums are useful for visitors?**

I don't think so I'm afraid. Museums are more like tourist attraction, because if tourists wish to search for information on a place, the Internet would be a much better option.

3. **Do you often visit museum?**

I don't. I wish I do but I never have the time. My parents took me to Vietnam Museum of Ethnology every Lunar New Year festival so that I have better understanding of Vietnamese's culture. My memories of that place are truly invaluable.

4. **Did you go to any museums when you were a child?**

I did, very often actually. As I said before, The Vietnam Museum of Ethology was my childhood! If my memory serves me well, it was 2007 Spring when I first visited the place. I still remember vividly how amazed I was stepping into the museum!

5. **When was the last time you visited a museum?**

Ever since I graduated and worked as a researcher, I've never had a chance to visit any museum much as I wish to. What a pity!

6. **Do you think museums are important?**

Absolutely! Museums are where knowledge and culture are preserved. Apparently, museums are of paramount importance and play an irreplaceable role in our educational system.

TOPIC 16: Time management

1. **How do you organize your time?**

As we all know, time is gold and no one can rewind the clock, so being able to manage time effectively is my top priority. In order to get things done and work efficiently, I carry a schedule notebook with me and update on tasks I have to work on every week.

2. **Do you think people organize time in the same way?**

I can't tell. I mean, I'm used to writing my schedule down, kind of old-fashioned. My friends, however, install an app to control their time and their spending as well. I've never tried one, to be honest, I'm not that good with technology so I don't think I'll ever bother to install one in the future.

3. **Do you think it is important to be on time?**

100%! Being punctual is like a must, like a foundation for mutual trust. Arriving late, in any circumstances, can be disrespectful to your partner.

4. **How do you feel when you are late for an appointment?**

Frankly speaking, I feel ashamed. Before when I was younger, I wasn't that serious about being punctual. Now that I'm older, fully aware of my responsibilities, the weight of my very actions, I rarely make such mistakes anymore.

5. **How do you feel when others are late?**

Well, it depends. If a person is involved in an unprecedented or unavoidable event, then it's understandable. However, if a person is late purely because he or she is careless, then it's hard to ignore.

TOPIC 17: Weather

1. **What's the weather like today?**

I not quite sure since I have been indoor the entire day. But I guess it's raining, I checked the weather forecast yesterday and it said so.

2. **What's the weather like in your hometown?**

My country, Vietnam, has tropical climate. It explains a lot why Ho Chi Minh is boiling hot all year round and where I live, Hanoi, is only slightly chilly in the winter.

3. **What's your favorite season?**

Autumn is my absolute favorite! Just the right amount of rain, neither too hot nor too cold, perfect for outdoor activities. I can fall in love with the season, seriously, exactly that kind of weather when there is sunshine but you can still put on a hoodie!

4. **Do you like snow?**

I don't know, I have never seen snow my entire life to actually know whether I'll like it or not actually. My friends in England told me snow isn't that fascinating to watch, but I guess I still want to try once.

5. **Do you watch the weather forecasts?**

I don't watch the weather forecast on a daily basis, but my mother does. She always keeps me updated and tells me when to bring an umbrella.

6. **Does the weather ever affect what you do?**

Most of the time, really. I'm easily affected by the weather. Even when I have tons of work to do, I tend to procrastinate I get in bed – my favorite place – and sleep my day away whenever it rains cats and dogs.

TOPIC 18: Noises

1. **Do you mind noises?**

Absolutely yes. I like my space and am likely to be distracted whenever there is noise. It feels like my personal space is being disrupted when I hear noises and it drives me crazy.

2. **What types of noise do you come across in your daily life?**

The noises of vehicles whenever I sit in usual traffic jams are those that I usually come across, and unfortunately are the most unpleasing ones to hear. I can barely keep my sanity with those noises.

3. **Are there any sounds that you like?**

I'm not sure. I mean, if music is counted, then yes, I do like music. Listening to soothing melodies can be healing at times, especially when I'm under great pressure.

4. **Where can you hear loud noise?**

On the street, mainly. Maybe from my neighbor who turns up his speaker at midnight once in a fortnight as well.

5. **Do you think there's too much noise in modern society?**

Absolutely, I can still hear the noise of a truck horning while I'm on the 6th floor of a building. I think it is high time people considered noise pollution a real problem that needs to be solved.

6. **Are cities becoming noisier?**

Well yes. As our society grows crowded and more advanced, more people than ever before can afford their personal vehicles, which contributes much to noise pollution nowadays. To be honest, actions to alleviate this problem should be taken as soon as possible.

TOPIC 19: Hats

1. **Do you like to wear hats?**

Not really, I'm not that fascinated about hats or hat fashion. I do like helmet though, since I have to wear it almost every day.

2. **What kinds of hats do you have?**

As I said before, I have helmets, lots of them since I have to constantly buy new ones, I always forget my previous helmets at home! So yes, I have numerous kinds of helmet, including full face helmets and half face helmets.

3. **Where do you like to buy hats?**

I rarely buy hats, my sister, on the contrary, is obsessed with hat fashion. Therefore, once in a while, whenever I need to buy a new hat, she would take me to her favorite hat shop downtown.

4. **Is wearing hats popular in your country?**

I'm not quite sure, actually. If helmet is counted, then of course whoever rides a motorbike needs one. But other types of hats like beanie or boater, I think, are not that famous to people.

TOPIC 20: Bags

1. **Do you like bags?**

As someone who is really keen on fashion, bag is a necessary accessory to me. I am particularly interested in bags so I purchase many different bags to match my outfits.

2. **What types of bags do you like?**

Besides backpacks to use for school, I have a lot of pretty handbags and clutch bags. To me, handbags might be the most useful one since it can be easily carried around and still have enough space for my necessities.

3. **Do you usually carry a bag?**

Absolutely. I need to carry a lot of stuff when going out so bags are a crucial item. But above all, carrying a bag always makes me feel fashionable.

4. **What do you put in these bags?**

Well, of course there will be my self-phone and money. Also, any girl would have lipsticks and other cosmetic products such as perfume or eyeliner. I sometimes carry an extra charger in case my phone runs out of battery.

5. **What sorts of bags do women like to buy?**

As I had mentioned before, pretty bags like clutch bags or handbags are women's favorite choice since they are usually beautiful and useful at the same time.

TOPIC 21: News

1. **Are you very interested in the news?**

Yes I am. But I am only interested in news about science and health because I'm not a fan of politics. Besides, news about science and health are both fun and useful.

2. **Why do you want to know the latest news?**

To be well-informed I guess. I don't want to be someone who doesn't know anything that is happening around the world. And news about science and health is really awesome with new discoveries and facts, which is a great way to relax.

3. **How important is it to you to get the news every day?**

Well it's hard to say because it's not the same for everyone. I myself have to read the news every single day because it's fun and relaxing, but it's not something that I can't live without. Some other people even don't bother reading the news at all.

4. **What sorts of news are you most interested in?**

As I said before, I'm into news about science and health. I love reading about new inventions, discoveries about the universe. News about health is fun to read too. But sometimes, I also read articles about crime which is kind of scary.

5. **How do you usually find this news?**

Most of the time, I read these kinds of news online. There're a few websites that I visit frequently like New scientist or National Geographic.

6. **Do you prefer to read newspapers or watch TV to get your news?**

I haven't watched TV since high school. That's 8 years. So between these 2 options, I would have to go with reading newspapers.

TOPIC 22: Reading books

1. **What kinds of books did you like to read when you were young?**

When I was young, I didn't like reading because textbooks at school were very boring, which made me think that all books are boring. However, I did read Japanese manga like Naruto or One Piece. It's a great way to chill out.

2. **Do you still keep these books?**

Unfortunately no. When I got into college and my mom asked me to clean my room and either throw away or donate unused items, I decided to give those comic books to children at a local kindergarten.

3. **Have you ever given others books as gifts?**

Yes once in a while, even if it's not any special occasion like birthday or something, I still buy books as presents for other people.

4. **What's your favorite kind of books?**

Now I read all kinds of books: novels, fictions, science all sorts of stuff. Each kind has its own values and gives me different feelings. So I can't think of one particular kind of book right now.

TOPIC 23: Countryside

1. **Would you like to live in the countryside in the future?**

Not in a million years. I love it here, in Hanoi. Busy and pretty disorganized as it is, Hanoi is a really good place to settle down. The countryside is little boring and too quiet for me.

2. **What do people living in the countryside like to do?**

I have never lived in the countryside long enough to answer this question, but my grandma told me that people there like to get up early in the morning and gather under the shade of a big tree to smoke and chat before getting to work.

3. **What are the benefits of living in rural areas?**

I guess it has something to do with the atmosphere and lifestyle. Some people prefer the quietness and slow pace of life in rural areas. And the fresh air is also something a lot of people like about these areas. It's much better for human health than in big cities.

4. **What's the difference between living in the city and living the countryside?**

The differences between these places are mainly about work opportunities and the environment. In the city, you have access to all kinds of work, from blue-collar to white-collar jobs, while in the countryside you don't have much choice. However, the environment in the countryside is cleaner, which is much better for your health.

TOPIC 24: Sky

1. **Do you like to watch the sky?**

No honestly. I know some people do, like my uncle. He said looking at the sky in the autumn made him feel relaxed and it's a good way to kill time if you are feeling bored and have nothing to do.

2. **What is the sky like at night in your hometown?**

Nothing special I guess. I don't usually look at the sky but sometimes I do when I'm thinking about my life. It's dark and there's lots of cloud with a few sparkling stars.

3. **Do you like to watch stars?**

Not really. Staring at stars is a little bit scary, but I like watching videos about outer space and stars.

4. **Have you ever taken a course about stars?**

I'm not that big of a fan. Although I do like to watch fun videos about stars and to read books about astronomy. But spending money and time attending a course about this, it's not such a good idea to me.

5. **What's your favorite star?**

Hmmmm… my favorite star? I guess the sun. You know why? Because it's the only star in the entire universe that I know so … haha

TOPIC 25: Shopping

1. **Are there many shops near your home?**

Yes. There's one right in front of my house that sells almost everything a human being would need to live comfortably. In my neighborhood, there're at least a dozen like that, so you can guess the competition here is really intense.

2. **Do you like shopping?**

Who doesn't? It's a fantastic way to let off some steam. I work almost everyday from morning to evening so whenever I have some free time, I will go to a shopping mall and have a great time browsing around.

3. **Who usually does the grocery shopping in your home?**

My mom. Sometimes when I'm at home on Sunday, I'll go with her. I'm pretty sure that my dad doesn't go shopping with my mom during weekdays because he has his own hobby, which is fishing. So from Monday to Saturday, my mom will do the grocery shopping alone.

4. **How often do you buy something in a shop?**

Maybe once a week. I love shopping, but my free time doesn't allow me to go to shopping malls to buy things too often. Sometimes, when I'm too busy, maybe only once every two weeks.

TOPIC 26: Food/Cooking

1. **Is food important to you?**

That's a no-brainer question. Food is vitally important to everyone because no one can survive for a week without eating. If you want to live happily, you have to eat properly with healthy diets.

2. **What kinds of food do you particularly like?**

Fast food I guess. Although people say it's not good for your health, it still is very convenient and yummy. Especially Mc Donald's Royal Cheese Burger, you just cannot say no to it, absolutely mouth-watering.

3. **Is there any food you don't like?**

Hmmm … I'd say sea food. I used to be addicted to sea food when I was a child. Maybe I ate too much sea food that I became allergic to it unfortunately.

4. **What kinds of food are most popular in your country?**

In Vietnam, it's absolutely nice noodle soup with beef, usually known as "Pho bo" among the locals. Its broth is sweet and nutritious. Every person who comes from a foreign country just have to try "Pho bo" just once when he or she visits Vietnam.

5. **Do you like cooking?**

I do. In fact, I did the cooking everyday when I was a college freshman. I enjoyed it so much that I invited my friends to my room and had parties with food that I made once in a while.

6. **Who usually does the cooking in your home?**

When I lived with my parents, it's my mom who's the main cook. All of my family members and other people agreed that her food was simply awesome and that she should become a professional chef. Sometimes, I helped her with the cooking and we had a lot of fun preparing the meals.

TOPIC 27: Happiness

1. **What do you think of happiness?**

That's a tough question. Happiness is a really abstract and complicated concept and how each person perceives happiness is also different. Some people think happiness is when they are loved by other people, while others think happiness has something to do with money and reputation.

2. **What do you like to do when you are happy?**

I sing and do stupid stuff like chicken dancing. I'm a horrible singer but who cares. I'm happy then I'll sing, it doesn't matter whether other people think of me as a freak or not.

3. **What kinds of things make you happy?**

Money and stuff. Some people say that it's too materialistic but come on, admit it, money does make you happy. You can buy a lot of things with money and have a comfortable life. You can make other people happy if you have money too.

4. **What kinds of things do people in your country feel happy about?**

We're all living in the world where materialism prevails so money always makes people happy. Also, in Vietnam, there's something else that usually accompanies money, and it's power.

5. **Is it easy to make you happy?**

Yes, I'm a simple man. Small things like a book can make me satisfied. Well, if anything, I'd love it if someone gives me a car or something.

ZIM
Luyện thi IELTS cam kết đầu ra

50 IELTS SPEAKING

PART 2 TOPICS

FROM JANUARY TO MAY 2018

ZIM

1. Describe your favorite season of the year.

You should say:

- What the weather is like.
- Why you like this season.
- What activities you usually do during this season.
- How different kinds of weather in this season affect people.

Sample

Today, I am going to tell you about my favourite season. Honestly, I love all the seasons but I think my favourite is spring. Usually, it starts at the end of December in our country and lasts till the middle of March.

The weather in Vietnam is the best during spring because you will not **suffer from** the **excessive** heat of summer or the freezing wind of winter. The temperature is **tolerable** both day and night. One of the best things about spring is that, during this poetic season, nature displays itself in beautiful green and flowers are noticed everywhere. Fruit trees, such as cherry and apricot trees are **in full blossom**, and colourful flowers such as daffodils and marigolds bloom in parks and gardens. The sounds of spring are wonderful too. A typical spring day will begin when some birds start their **morning chorus** as they look for a mate. We also celebrate Tet, one of the most anticipated holidays by the Vietnamese people. This is an occasion for **pilgrimages**, family reunions and many festivals. Parties full of delicious traditional dishes are the main theme for the whole holiday of Tet.

I am of the opinion that different kinds of weather can affect people's health. Even among those **in the prime of** health, an excessively hot or cold day can lead to illness or injury, let alone the elderly, who can be more **susceptible** to extreme weather conditions. Weather can also make a huge impact on people's lives. Obviously, the weather **dictates** what you are going to wear for the day, often depending on the time of year. Also, winter snow storms in Western countries can cancel school or make your morning commute a **hassle**.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **suffer from:** be badly affected by
- **excessive:** greater than what seems reasonable or appropriate
- **tolerable:** moderate, acceptable
- **in full blossom:** with the flowers fully open
- **morning chorus:** early morning bird songs
- **pilgrimage:** a journey to a holy place for religious reasons
- **in the prime of:** in the best, most successful, most productive stage
- **susceptible:** very likely to be influenced, harmed or affected
- **dictate:** decide, determine
- **hassle:** irritating inconvenience

ZIM

2. Describe a public place that you think needs improvements.

You should say:

- What the place is.
- When you visit the place.
- What do you like and dislike about the public place

Sample

I would like to talk about a public place that I think needs improvement. Among the most popular public places where people can **socialise** and hang out with each other is Dam Sen, an amusement park in Ho Chi Minh city, considered a green **oasis** located in District 11.

Last month, I decided to take my nieces and nephews there. The park is comprised of many areas including a **roller coaster** which, to my surprise, the children **eagerly** rode. Time just flew by with the kids.

We liked everything about the park except the fact that people were throwing empty water bottles here and there. I felt there should be more bins. Well, to tell the truth, the park is rather old. Sometimes my parents used to take me there in my childhood. However, the park was a lot different from what I could remember. Some facilities at its far end were covered in moss and overgrown weeds. The **crumbling** walls gave the impression that the area had been **abandoned for ages**. One day, to our **terror**, we found some used needles laying **amidst** the **shabby greenery**, **invisible** and able to **pierce** the common light-weight shoes the children wear.

I would say that the city authority should encourage local people or voluntary groups to tidy up the park and hire more care-takers to make it a safer and more attractive playground for children. Also, a certain amount of money is needed to install new restrooms and other safety-oriented upgrades like street lighting or warning signs.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **socialise:** to meet and spend time with people in a friendly way
- **oasis:** an area in the desert where there is water and where plants grow
- **roller coaster**: a track at a fairground that goes up and down very steep slopes and that people ride on in a small train for fun and excitement
- **eagerly**: in a way that shows great interest and excitement
- **crumble**: break something into very small pieces
- **abandon:** leave somebody with no intention of returning
- **for ages:** for a long time
- **terror:** extreme fear
- **amidst**: among
- **shabby:** in poor condition
- **greenery:** green leaves and plants
- **invisible:** cannot be seen
- **pierce:** go through

ZIM

3. Describe a city or country you want to live the most in the future.

You should say:

- What city it is.
- Where it is located.
- Why you like it.

Sample

I would like to tell you about Tokyo, the city I want to live in the most in the future. It is the capital city of Japan and is the most populous **metropolitan** area in the world.

The most important reason I wish to **settle down** in Tokyo is the **co-existence** of modern and traditional values. It's the kind of city where the red gates of a centuries-old Shinto **shrine** may well be found just next door to a glass skyscraper **showcasing** the finest 21st century technology. Or where a quiet green lane lined with wooden low-rise houses and an old school tofu shop might sit just **a short stroll from** a neon-lit square packed with **flickering** billboards and rainbow-bright street fashion.

The **hectic** life in Tokyo is also an **irresistible** attraction for young people. Tokyo's railway system seems like it was designed to win world records. It's rare to find a location in the metropolitan area that can't be reached with a train ride and a short walk. It is also common knowledge that you could spend hours **drooling** over the **elaborate** pastries and picture-perfect sushi rolls in a department store.

I feel that the city is moving toward the future. I believe Tokyo will become a city that is full of surprises.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **metropolitan:** connected with a large or capital city
- **settle down:** start to have a quieter way of life
- **co-existence:** the state of being together in the same place at the same time
- **shrine**: a place where people come to worship
- **showcase:** present
- **a short stroll from**: not far from
- **flicker:** keep going on and off as it shines or burns
- **hectic**: full of activity
- **irresistible**: cannot be stopped or resisted
- **drool:** let saliva come out of your mouth
- **elaborate**: carefully prepared

ZIM

4. Describe something you learned in a place/from a person.

You should say:

- What you learned.
- When this happened.
- Where it was/ Who taught you.
- How difficult it was to learn.

Sample

I am so lucky to have the chance to learn so many things from the people around me; the list of things I have learnt would be a very long one. I would like to **emphasise** one thing that I learned from a middle-aged woman in my neighborhood, and that is the pleasure of **voluntary** activities.

We call her Ms. Lan. She was born and grew up during one of the most **turbulent** periods in Vietnamese modern history. Now, in her late 50s, she became interested in trying to make a difference — working for her own volunteer organization.

She has been running a group of **dedicated**, **compassionate** young people who **are all committed to** making a positive difference to the lives of **senior citizens** in **nursing homes** around the town. "Spending time with the elderly is very important, they don't always have relatives to visit them so I try to fill that gap and spend a bit of time with them. I have a **rapport** with elderly people, I'm a patient person and I like to sit down and talk to them," she once told us.

During my working under her guidance, I have learnt about the benefits of working as a volunteer. If you have ever volunteered, you may have noticed that you felt fantastic afterward. Community service can help you gain confidence by giving the chance to try something new and build a real sense of **achievement**. Besides, volunteering can help you meet different kinds of people and make new friends.

Generally speaking, volunteering can have a real and valuable positive affect on people, communities and society. Besides, I believe that we can learn much about life from those who have seen it almost to the end.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **emphasise:** give special importance to
- **voluntary:** done willingly
- **turbulent:** full of sudden change and confusion
- **dedicated to:** working hard at
- **compassionate:** feeling or showing sympathy for people who are suffering
- **be committed to**: willing to work hard and give your time and energy to
- **senior citizen:** the aged
- **nursing home:** a public or private residential facility providing a high level of long-term personal or nursing care for the elderly
- **rapport**: a friendly relationship
- **achievement:** a thing that somebody has done successfully

ZIM

5. Describe an occasion where you received a good service from a company or shop

You should say:

- What the service was.
- When and where it happened.
- Whom you were with.
- How you felt about it.
- Explain why you think it was good service.

Sample

I am going to talk about how satisfied I was when receiving good service from a music shop a couple of months ago.

One day, after watching a really **motivational** concert, I decided to start learning how to play the guitar. As I was walking along one of the main shopping streets in the city centre to look for a music shop, a large window displaying all sorts of **musical instruments** caught my eye. I decided to go in and have a look around.

A young good-looking shop assistant appeared and greeted me with a **glowing** smile. After **exchanging pleasantries**, I explained to the assistant that I had never played the guitar before in my life and that I wondered what the differences were between the various acoustic guitars on show. He talked to me about the different **makes** and models, whether they were factory or hand made, the woods and **varnishes** used, the variation in sound quality and, of course, the price range. Though I was a bit **overwhelmed** by what he said as a non-musician, I highly appreciated his attitude.

To tell the truth, it is difficult to find very smart and efficient customer service nowadays. I was quite satisfied with the service the young man provided, he was obviously well-trained, and he was patient enough to fully understand what my problem was and used his professional skills to deal with it. Besides, he was very proficient in acoustic guitar playing, and seemed **reliable** to me.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **motivational**: making somebody want to do something
- **musical instrument:** an object used for producing musical sounds
- **glowing**: giving enthusiastic praise
- **exchange pleasantries:** talk to each other politely about unimportant things
- **make:** a product made by a particular company
- **varnish**: a clear sticky liquid used for covering wood or other surfaces
- **overwhelm:** affect someone's emotions in a very powerful way
- **reliable:** that can be trusted to do something well

ZIM

6. Describe a toy that you received when you were a child.

You should say:

- What the toy was.
- Who gave it to you.
- How you used it.
- An explanation of how you felt when you got this toy.

Sample

Well, the first **sentimental item** that came to mind when I saw this topic was the **stuffed animal** named Marsupilami. This special toy was a birthday present. I can't remember exactly how old I was, but I was probably about 5 or 6. This toy was important to me because I **longed for** it and it was a gift from my parents.

The toy was **identical to** the **character** in the cartoon I had watched. Therefore, I felt as if he had come from the movie. Marsupilami was a black-spotted yellow monkey-like **creature** with dog-like ears. The animals were **characterized** by an **incredibly** long, strong and flexible tail, used for almost any task.

As a kid, this was a fascinating and exciting toy for me. In the beginning, I did not allow any of my cousins and friends to touch Marsupilami. Marsupilami used to sit proudly on my bed each and every day, and every night he "slept" next to my pillow.

Thanks to the toy, I experienced a happy childhood. As the saying goes, "Teddy bears don't need hearts as they are already stuffed with love." This is also true for my beloved Marsupilami.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **sentimental item**: the object whose value derives from personal or emotional associations rather than material worth
- **stuffed animal:** a toy with an outer fabric sewn from a textile and then stuffed with a flexible material
- **long for**: want very much
- **identical:** exactly the same
- **character**: a person or an animal in a book, play or film/movie
- **creature**: a living thing
- **characterize:** be typical of
- **incredibly**: in a way that is very difficult to believe

7. Describe a famous person that you are interested in

You should say:

- Who this person is.
- How you know about this person.
- What this person is famous for.
- Why you are interested in this person.

Sample

A famous person who I am really interested in is definitely My Tam. She is the best pop singer in Viet Nam who **embarked on** her singing career in 1999. The Da Nang-born singer has recently become Vietnam's first-ever artist to be listed on Billboard's World Albums chart, after releasing her ninth studio album 'Tam 9'.

My Tam is my biggest idol because she is a great singer with beautiful voice. Some years ago, I caught a glimpse of her on TV and was immediately **hooked** by her **outstanding** performance. I have became her loyal fan since then. I really like the way she sings and the way she expresses the feeling of the song. To my **admiration**, she has always worked seriously to give high quality music products.

My Tam is beloved for her good personality too. She is known to all her fans for her **gregariousness** and sense of humour. Besides, she has also **devoted her time to** organizing free concerts for univeristy students nationwide. Together with her fans and friends, she has been doing a lot of **charity** activities silently to help the poor, the sick and the homeless people.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **embark on**: start
- **hooked:** enjoying very much
- **outstanding**: extremely good; excellent
- **admiration:** a feeling of respect and liking
- **gregariousness**: the quality of liking to be with other people
- **devote to**: to give an amount of time, attention, etc. to something
- **charity:** an organization for helping people in need

8. Describe a photo you have taken

You should say:

- Where you took it.
- When you took the photo.
- What/who is in the photo.
- How you felt about the photo.

Sample

I am going to talk about a photo that I took some years ago when my family went on holiday in Phan Thiet beach. The picture **captured** the memory of a very happy family. This is a priceless **possession** to me and I would like to keep it with me for the rest of my life.

I have seen it thousands times and still I look at it with an **indescribable delight**. In the picture, everyone was smiling **cheerfully**. My father's eyes were **sparkling** and the corners of his eyes **crinkled**. To tell the truth, it was very rare to see my father's smile as he always kept a serious **facial expression**. Needless to say, my mother was standing next to him with warm happiness glowing in her face. My younger brothers and sisters were not really **photogenic** because they were bursting out laughing for a reason I could not remember clearly.

In the back ground, the sun looked like it was gradually **receding** into the waters below. The sky consisted of **an assortment of** shades, a blend of reds, oranges and yellows. The water below was **mirroring** this effect. The scene was beautiful.

I have to admit that I know very little about the **technical** aspects of camera and to be honest I take photos from my own preference rather than maintaining aspects a professional photographer would do. Though the photo was not professionally shot, it is still the most treasured photo I could have.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **capture:** catch
- **possession**: something that you own
- **indescribable:** so extreme or unusual it is almost impossible to describe
- **delight:** a feeling of great pleasure
- **cheerfully:** in a way that shows you are happy
- **sparkle:** shine brightly
- **crinkle:** form a lot of thin folds or lines

- **facial expression:** a gesture executed with the facial muscles
- **photogenic**: looking attractive in photographs
- **recede:** move gradually away from
- **an assortment of**: a variety of
- **mirror:** show the image of
- **technical:** connected with the practical use of machinery

ZIM

9. Describe an interesting event in your school

You should say:

- What the event was.
- When the event was.
- Why it was interesting.
- How you felt about it.

Sample

An enjoyable event I would like to talk here is the Sports Competition that happened in my middle school stage. At the time, my classmates and I were at most twelve or thirteen years old. The main purpose of this event was to motivate students to do more sports on the understanding that participating in sports is one of the best ways to keep fit both physically and mentally.

There were so many joyful things happening, that I cannot tell you all of them. The day started with track events. There were 50, 100 and 200 meters races. There was **tremendous applause** from the spectators, which included teachers and parents. Then the field events: tug of war, long jump, high jump and shot put were held. Every event drew cheers and applause from the **spectators**. The day went by very fast. I came in first in the long jump event, and second in the 100 metre race and shot put. At about five o'clock, our Guest-of-Honour gave away the **trophies** to the winners. My class was overall **runners-up**.

The sports day turned out to be the grandest day of the year for the school. The crowd, the music, the competition, the excitement of the game, and the liveliness and **spontaneous** actions of the spectators were **noteworthy**.

After the competition, we all realize that the necessity of sports is immense in human life. It energises people who participate in the events and the pleasures are inexpressible.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **tremendous:** great
- **applause**: the noise made by a group of people clapping their hands
- **spectator:** a person who is watching an event, especially a sports event
- **trophy:** an object such as a silver cup that is given as a prize for winning a competition
- **runner-up**: a person or team that finishes second in a race or competition
- **spontaneous**: not planned but done because you suddenly want to do it
- **noteworthy**: deserving to be noticed

10. Describe a situation where you have to be polite

You should say:

- What it is.
- What you do to be polite.
- Why you have to be polite.
- How you feel about it.

Sample

I would like to start by saying that I always try to be polite in all situations, because that was how I was **brought up**. However, I have to admit that there are just some individuals out there who enjoying feeding on negative energy.

It happened when I had to work in a team with other university friends on an assignment in Economic Studies. In our group then, there was one person who I disliked because he always had **half-baked** knowledge on everything and a **perception** that he knew everything. His attitude made everyone in our group really annoyed and sometimes the teamwork became stressful.

So, regarding why I had to be polite, it was because we had to work together over a period of about four months and ensure the best outcome. Although it was difficult at first because of his **personality** and the fact that he always thought that he was right and had the best ideas, eventually we all managed to work as a team and by the end of the project he wasn't really as bad as he had been at the beginning and was more willing to **collaborate** with the rest of us in the group. And that was my experience of being nice to someone I disliked.

The incident helped me understand that it is impossible to **shield** yourself from negativity, so the only things you can do are learn how to deal with hateful people and grow thicker skin.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **bring up:** look after
- **half-baked**: not well planned or considered
- **perception:** the ability to understand
- **personality:** a person's character
- **collaborate**: work together
- **shield:** protect

11. Describe a visitor in your home

You should say:

- Who this visitor was.
- When he/she visited your home.
- Why he/she came to visit.
- Whether you liked him/her or not

Sample

Today I would like to talk about one of the guests who visited my family and left a great **impression** on me. His name was Armane, a French man and my brother's business partner for more than 2 years. I heard from my mother that my brother happened to meet him at yoga and meditation class. Last week, he came to our house to say goodbye before returning to Paris.

Armane had a masculine look, with large blue eyes and a wide forehead. His sharp nose looked perfect, too. Though an European man, he seemed to have a **profound** understanding of Vietnamese culture. The way he used the chopsticks and rolled the vegetables with rice paper told me that he was deeply aware of our **customary table manners**. Armane also shared with us that at first he found it really stressful to follow such **a minefield of social no-no's**.

Within a week of his visit, Armane surprised us with a thank-you card which he **meticulously** made himself. We were really happy to hear from Armane. Although my parents were understanding of foreigners' unfamiliarity with the **norms** of Vietnamese society, they were really impressed that Armane can master many of the traditional practices. He earnt our utmost respect.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **impression**: an idea, a feeling or an opinion that you get about somebody/something
- **profound**: showing great knowledge or understanding
- **customary:** be what people usually do in a particular place or situation
- **table manners:** the rules used while having meals
- **a minefield of:** a lot of
- **social no-no:** something unacceptable or impermissible
- **meticulous**: taking or showing extreme care
- **norm:** a situation or a pattern of behaviour that is usual or expected

12. Describe a place in your city you want to go to

You should say:

- What this place is.
- Where this place is.
- Why you like this place.
- What do you want to do there.

Sample

Ho Chi Minh City is a popular tourist destination due to its fascinating culture, classic French **architecture**, **sleek** skyscrapers as well as **ornate** temples and pagodas. As a result, it is pretty difficult to pick out one particular place among millions of tourist attractions in Ho Chi Minh City. Personally, I believe that Bitexco Financial Tower is the most impressive **skyscraper**. It is located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City's business and entertainment district. At completion in 2010, it became the tallest building in Vietnam until January 2011.

The creative **mastermind** behind Bitexco drew **inspiration** for this skyscraper's **unique** shape from Vietnam's national flower, the lotus. To the Vietnamese, the lotus is a symbol of **purity**, **commitment** and **optimism**. This 68-storey building features many offices, shops, restaurants. The main attraction at the tower is the Sky Deck where visitors can enjoy dramatic views across the **bustling** city below.

There are lots of places I like to go in Ho Chi Minh city, depending on my mood. If you want to enjoy the hectic and modern lifestyle, Bitexco is an ideal attraction to consider.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **architecture:** the design or style of a building
- **sleek**: smooth and shiny
- **ornate**: covered with a lot of decoration
- **skyscraper:** a very tall building in a city
- **mastermind:** an intelligent person who plans and directs a complicated project or activity
- **inspiration**: the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative
- **unique**: being the only one of its kind
- **purity:** the state or quality of being pure
- **commitment:** the willingness to work hard
- **optimism:** a feeling that good things will happen
- **bustling:** full of people moving about in a busy way

13. Describe an important river/lake in your country

You should say:

- What this river is called.
- How you know about it.
- How long/big it is.
- Why it is important.

Sample

I am going to talk about the Mekong river, one of the biggest and most important rivers located in southwestern part of Vietnam. With a length of about 2,700 miles, the river is the 7th longest is Asia. Locally, it's called "River of the Nine Dragons" because the small branches of the river are, **since time immemorial**, associated with the image of nine **majestic** dragons. Needless to say, the river is mentioned in a variety of poems and songs.

In terms of **agriculture**, the **mighty** river together with its surrounding delta has been known as the agricultural heart of southern Vietnam and the 'rice bowl' of the whole country. The Mekong is also Vietnam's most important fishing region.

If you are a **discerning** tourist who really has 'wearing a conical hat in a sampan boat in Vietnam' on your **bucket list**, a trip to Mekong Delta is a must. It is carpeted in a dizzying variety of greens and is also a place where boats, houses and markets float upon the innumerable rivers, canals and streams that **criss-cross** the landscape like arteries. Embarking on a Mekong River cruise provides tourists with fascinating insight into the local rural way of life, including the opportunity to visit some of the region's best-known sites, along with plenty of hidden **gems**.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **since time immemorial:** for a very long time
- **majestic:** impressive
- **agriculture:** the cultivation and breeding of animals and plants
- **mighty**: very strong and powerful
- **discerning:** able to judge the good quality of something
- **bucket list:** a number of experiences or achievements that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime
- **criss-cross**: mark with intersecting lines
- **gem:** a person, place or thing that is especially good

14. Describe a person you know

You should say:

- Who this person is.
- How long you have known each other.
- How you got to know him/her.
- How you feel about this person.

Sample

I'm going to talk about a friend I met in college who goes by the name Moon.

I met her during our freshman year orientation, and I personally think I was very lucky to have been introduced to her. She is a Chinese student whom everybody **adores**. I have known her for 3 years, and in all those 3 years, I have never once been bored by her or her presence. She is always energetic and fun to be with. We had a lot of classes together in our first year and she always came to help me with my homework in the weekends. I got to know her better through our reviews for exams together and our hangouts after class. **Cheerful** as she might have appeared to be, she received a lot of pressure from her parents about good grades and getting into a good graduate school. I admire the way she always tried to stay positive despite all the stress she was under.

Now that we're in our final year of university, I don't see her as often anymore. But once in a while, she sends me a message to check how I'm doing with my schoolwork and I really appreciate her for that. Either way, I know that I have **cherished our time together**, and that whether or not we can keep being in each other's lives, I will always look back on our college experiences with great fondness.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Adore**: love and respect (someone) deeply.
- **Cheerful**: noticeably happy and optimistic.
- **Cherish our time together**: valuing highly the time spent together, usually in an emotional context.

15. Describe an impressive story you heard from other people

You should say:

- What was this story.
- When did you hear about it.
- Who told you this story.
- Why you were impressed by it.

Sample

I would like to share a funny story that I heard from Julie, a friend of mine, a long time ago. It was a random day that our group hung out at a coffee shop and sat at the circle table near the window, as we usually do. This was our favourite spot. But that day, instead of ordering a cappuccino as I usually do, I decided to try a completely new drink – mojito mixed with some fruit, though I can't remember exactly what.

The mojito looked good on the outside but its taste was unbearable to me. Despite my warning, Julie insisted on trying it. It turned out that she liked the drink very much and in that moment, she concluded that it tasted exactly like the toothpaste that she ate in her childhood. Learning of this incident, we were a bit shocked as to why she ate such a thing, so she continued to **elaborate on her story**. She recalled that she indeed thought that the taste of toothpaste was delicious, and even she was banned from eating it by her parents, she secretly saved money to buy one for herself a few years later. She added that she sneakily hid the yube in the room and she could finish the whole thing in one go. We were frozen and all eyes were on her for a few seconds. Then we all **burst into laughter**. I still remember laughing so hard that my tears ran down.

I was indeed impressed by her story. As the matter of fact, it wasn't the first time I had heard of someone enjoying eating toothpaste, but secretly saving money to do this was a surprise element and it was hilarious. And of course, it has become an inside joke between us since then.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Elaborate on the story**: Explain in greater detail.
- **Burst into laughter**: A spontanious and sudden fit of laughter.

16. Describe a recent development in your city

You should say:

- What this development is.
- How it could help people.
- What benefits it could bring.
- Whether it changes your life or not.

Sample

One of the newest additions to my city that I've noticed is that the public parks are now equipped with **communal exercise equipment**.

I've seen then being installed gradually over the last few months, and now they are common enough that even small local neighborhood parks also have them. I believe that they are going to be very helpful to a lot of different people. No matter what, most people can use more exercise in their life. With these sets of equipment, now there is an extra way for them to get this much needed exercise. People who want to exercise but would normally not go to the gym now have a new way to access equipment. This will help them find more ways to work out without costing them much time or money.

In addition, this would also **serve as an encouragement** for people who normally don't think about exercise to start paying more attention to this topic. They now can try out these machines at no cost to themselves, and this can help them **gauge their interest** in different exercising routines. More importantly, this helps people get used to the idea of exercise as a necessary part of life.

I believe that this will personally benefit me. I normally spend a lot of time in the park, and this will be very helpful in allowing me to spend some of that time more productively and in a way that benefits my health.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Communal exercise equipment**: Exercise and gym equipment that everyone can use.
- **Serve as an encouragement**: Will guide and support someone in participating in an activity or achieving a goal.
- **Gauge one's interest**: Decide how interested someone is in an activity or goal.

17. Describe an unforgettable dinner

You should say:

- When was the dinner.
- Where was the dinner.
- Who did you dine with.
- Why is it unforgettable.

Sample

I would like to talk about an evening meal that I will never forget.

It was last summer when my boyfriend invited me to meet his parents. I was so excited yet nervous at the same time. He was my classmate back in high school, so I had met his mom several times before but not in a role of his girlfriend. I chose to have dinner on a weekday, the 10th of the month to be exact because it was the date that we started dating. His parents would be home at about 6pm after their work, so it was perfect time to have dinner.

At first, we decided to go out for dinner but, on the second thought, a **home-cooked meal** would **leave a good impression** on his parents so we decided to do that. It turned out to be a stupid decision because I didn't know how to cook at all. After hours searching for recipes on Google and watch some cooking channels on Youtube, I managed to pick olive salad and roasted chicken, which I thought couldn't be messed up. In the meanwhile, my boyfriend was setting up tables and lights on the veranda to create a warm atmosphere.

Finally, as everything had just been finished, his parents came back home. We greeted and sat down together in a small round table. It was awkward for the first few minutes because I didn't know what to say. However, in the middle of the meal, his parents **paid me a compliment** on the dishes I cooked and told me some secrets about my boyfriend's childhood that eased my tension. His mom and I were on the same page and could talk for hours about any of the conversation topics. Admittedly, the food was not a great success. It was a bit salty and poorly decorated but we had great time talking. This moment really helped **strengthen our relationship** by making me feel like a member of his family.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Home-cooked meal**: Food cooked at home.
- **Leave a good impression**: Make others feel good about you, often after a first meeting.
- **Pay somebody a compliment**: Say something nice about someone, usually directly to them.
- **Strengthen our relationship**: Have a greater bond of friendship between two or more people.

18. Describe a historical era you are interested in

You should say:

- When this era was.
- How you learnt about it.
- What it was famous for.
- Why you are interested in this era.

Sample

If I could go in a time machine, I would choose to go back to the **glorious time** of Hong Bang period in about 2000 BC, the very first days of my country.

At that time, this place wasn't called Vietnam, it was under the rule of Hung Kings and was named Van Lang instead. What I find fascinating about this era is the **legends and myths** which I learned from History and Literature class back in school. Van Lang was a small country yet it was frequently invaded by the mysterious people. Whenever this period of time is mentioned, people will immediately relate to hundreds of wars, some even last for decades. We, the descendants, had no idea how they could win in those wars due to the sparse population and simple weapons, so we made up stories and fables to honor the bravery of our ancestors. Some specific examples are the legend of a three-year-old boy who went to war to save the country, or the myth of the Magic Crossbow which could deliver thousands of arrows and the story of the princess innocently trusting her lover and betraying her father, and the list goes on.

Although some of the stories are imaginary, it left a mark on me and nurtured my love for my home country since I was a little girl. Moreover, many of modern Vietnamese **cultural practices** also date back to this era, like cooking sticky rice cakes and displaying five-fruit trays on Tet holiday. This era can be considered as the cradle of our culture. I am always curious about the origin of our customs, and I believe that going back to this time could provide me with first-hand experience as well as a thorough understanding of my country's tradition.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Glorious time**: A time of greatness and prosperity.
- **Legends and myths**: Traditional stories, usually historical and unauthenticated (possibly not true).
- **Cultural practice**: an action commited by people of a particular culture, tradition or nationality.

19. Describe a special day out (A day out which does not cost too much)

You should say:

- Where did you go on that day.
- What did you do.
- Who did you go out with.
- Why was it special to you.

Sample

I went to the park with my friend the other day. She was my good friend in high school and we haven't seen each other for almost a year. As we were both having our semester break, we wanted to meet and catch up over dinner.

We actually planned to meet each other at the park and then decide on where to go later, but my friend got there pretty late so we ended up staying there. We got two takeout milk tea glasses and kebabs from a small street vendor and found a comfortable corner to enjoy ourselves. We sat there watching people passing by, talking about random things that came up. The weather that day was pretty nice actually. It was raining in the evening all week, so we were worried that we might have to go home early. But it **turned out to be** a fine evening.

I guess what makes the day special was the fact that, despite having to wait for my friend to show up and then not going anywhere like we originally planned to, we still had a lot more fun than I had expected. We **updated** each other on what was going on in our lives and discussed our plans for the future. It was a nice feeling to know even though we couldn't meet and talk frequently, we could still **bond** easily over milk tea and kebabs. It made me realize that sometimes we only need good company and good conversations to make something memorable.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Turn out to be**: The way an event or expectation happens in reality.
- **Update**: Catch up with past events.
- **Bond**: A connection between two or more people or things.

20. Describe a sports person you admire

You should say:

- Who is he/she.
- What did he/she do.
- What do you know about his/her life story.
- How much do you know about sports.

Sample

Being a big fan of basketball, I have long **idolised** the legend of this sport - Michael Jordan, also known as MJ. I first got curious about his life when I saw a logo portraying him on a product of the brand, Nike, and his life turned out to be intriguing to me.

He played in the position of shooting guard in one of the most **renowned** teams, the Chicago Bulls, and was famous for his exceptional leaping ability, illustrated by performing slam dunks from the free throw line. Early in his NBA career, while playing for the University of North Carolina, he appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated with the heading "A star is born" just over a month into his professional career. It was not only his talent but also his dedication that made him a strong clutch performer. He spent hours studying films of his opponents to improve his defense. Even when his right knee was injured, Jordan did not miss any games in the season from 1986 to 2001. Throughout his career, he led the Chicago Bulls to six championships, was awarded the NBA Most Valuable Player five times and was the first player to be honoured with both the NBA's Defensive Player of the year award and Most Valuable Player awards. All the compliments that journalists gave him were not an overstatement.

Although Michael Jordan retired in 2003, his skills and his legacy are still **a great inspiration** for any basketball player or person considering pursuing a basketball career. He is also active in charity activities. His clothing line, Jordan brand, has made donations to different organisations across America. It's difficult to describe how amazing Michael Jordan is in words, just watch a few of his videos playing in NBA games or his interviews, you'll figure it out yourself.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Idolise**: Admire, revere, or love greatly or excessively.
- **Renowned**: Known or talked about by many people; famous.
- **A great inspiration**: Someone that people aspire to be and are motivated by.

21. Describe an experience where you were late for an event

You should say:

- When did this happen.
- Why were you late.
- What consequence have you caused.
- How you felt afterwards.

Sample

I am an organised person and **tardiness** is not my problem. But I'd be lying if I told you that I am never late.

As a matter of fact, there was a time that I wasn't on time for the job interview. It was just a couple of months ago when I was in search of a new part-time job to gain experience in my career. There was a position in a company whose job description perfectly suited my needs and qualifications. I truly wanted to get the job. I completed an application form online right after I was informed there was a vacancy. To my surprise, just a day after that, they called me for an interview at 9 the next morning. I was **exhilarated** to hear the news and prepared everything carefully the night before the meeting. I chose what to wear, ironed the set of clothes to leave a good impression on the interviewer, I also put a notebook and a pen in my purse in case I had to take notes during the interview.

When everything was done, I set the alarm at 7am so that I wouldn't rush having breakfast and headed to the firm. However, the problem was that I forgot to charge to phone and it ran out of battery during my sleep. Therefore, it didn't go off the next morning. I overslept and woke up at 9am in frustration. I decided that I'd rather stay at home than appear as an irresponsible **latecomer** in the eye of others. I did wonder if I should ask them to postpone the interview, but I couldn't think of a reasonable excuse, so I just let it go. The consequence was that I missed the chance to do the job that I desperately wanted. I felt ashamed of myself for making such a silly mistake, but I did learn from it. I am now much more careful when it comes to similar situations.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Tardiness**: the quality or fact of being late; lateness.
- **Exhilarated**: to feel very happy, animated, or elated.
- **Latecomer**: Someone who arrives late.

22. Describe a piece of technology you like using except computers

You should say:

- What is this technology.
- How did you learn about it.
- How often do you use it.
- What difference it brings to your life.

Sample

I consider myself a **technophile**, so it's hard for me to live a day without using technological devices, especially my smartphone.

It was a present from my parents to congratulate me on my high school graduation four years ago, and it has come in handy ever since. It was the latest Android phone at that time with lots of cool apps and functions, but no one has ever gave me proper instruction on how to use it. I had to resort to Google search to explore my phone and troubleshoot its problems when the screen suddenly went black or the application failed to run. My phone is with me most of the time and even though I know it's not good for my eyesight, I can't help but use it on a daily basis and for more than 6 hours a day. I can't deny that this **multifunctional** device has a big influence on my life, both positively and negatively. I no longer need dictionaries, notebooks, a camera, a music player or a TV because now I can look up new words, take notes, capture photos, listen to music and watch films on the screen of my phone.

In replacement of a heavy bulky laptop, my **pocket-sized** phone also allows me to create and edit documents on the move. On top of that, it saves me a lot of time and money going to stores thanks to online shopping and notifications of when there are special offers. However, the drawback is that I am somewhat **overdependent** on it. If my phone suddenly runs out of battery or I forget it at home when I am outside, I may feel vulnerable and lonely. This phone has helped me a lot with my work and study but I am thinking of reducing the time using it for my well-being.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Technophile**: very interested or obsessed with technology.
- **Multifunctional**: does many different things.
- **Pocket-sized**: small enough to fit in your pocket.
- **Overdependent**: too dependent on something; cannot work or live without it.

23. Describe something special that you saved money to buy

You should say:

- What was this thing.
- Why was it special to you.
- How much did it cost you.
- How you felt after you bought it.

Sample

I am going to talk about a clock necklace that I gave my best friend, Julie.

It was at the end of grade 10 that she left me to continue her study abroad. For fear that I would be forgotten someday, I tried to think of a farewell gift that could make her think of me every time she saw it. It was not an easy task to find the right present; maybe it was because I was being too **picky**. She was more than a friend to me, she's more like my sister, or my soul mate. I didn't want to give her something meaningful but useless, or something useful but emotionally empty. I wanted something that was special, something that would make her say "wow" when she received it. I wandered from shop to shop to look for something, but I didn't know what.

One day, I came across something reminding me of her right away - a vintage necklace with a clock pendant. It perfectly **suited her style**, so she could wear it with any of her clothes. What I liked about the clock was that it was **custom-made**, I could design the number and write a message on it too. The thing is, when giving her the necklace, I set the clock to the local time in Vietnam, so whenever she needed to tell the time she would feel annoyed because of the difference in time zones, and I hoped that she would think of me right at the moment. The price wasn't expensive at all, about $20, but to a high school student like me at that time **it was a fortune**. I had to skip breakfast for an entire month to purchase it, but it was totally worth it. She had no clue about how I bought it but she liked it anyway. I felt exhilarated when I could buy my bestie something beautiful that she deserved, and I hoped that this chain would tie us forever.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Picky**: being careful in making the right choice; discerning.
- **Suit one's style**: matches a persons character or personal appearence.
- **Custom-made**: made to fit a particular person.
- **It was a fortune**: it cost a lot; was expensive.

24. Describe a holiday you would like to take in the future

You should say:

- When and where you would like to go
- Who you would like to go with
- What you would like to do on this holiday
- Why you would like to take the holiday

Sample

I **have itchy feet**, so I always have a detailed plan for the next holiday trip in mind.

This time, I am going to wait for my children's summer vacation so that I can take the whole family on a trip together. I am a family person and I love to travel with my loved ones. And, you know, summer won't be complete without sun tan and beach snapshots. Therefore, my **destination** must be a seaside city and Vinh Hy bay is my ideal place. I have heard about this place a long time ago, a friend of mine highly recommended this place after her trip there. It is known for **natural scenic beauty** and delicious fresh seafood at an affordable price.

I was curious, but couldn't find time to travel there due to my tight working schedule. But this summer we are going to make it. It's only a 4-hour ride from our city to the bay, so I am going to go by bike, as if I were going backpacking. One reason luring us to this place is that it's a **pristine** island, which means it won't be crowded with tourists and the food here won't be overpriced. Unlike other beaches which offer a variety of water sports like canoeing, scuba-diving, water-skiing and skydiving, there will not be many activities to do in Vinh Hy bay apart from sun-bathing and eating seafood. But this is going be a family time, and to me, spending time together is already enough.

In case my children get bored, so I am going to bring some family games like UNO and castle-building tools to enjoy time on the beach together. I am in dire need of this vacation as I want to escape from a stressful workload and pressure from city life for a while with my kids and my spouse. Also, I think it is a good idea to reward my children with a trip after studying hard throughout the school year.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Have itchy feet**: have a desire to travel; don't want to stay in one place.
- **Destination**: a place that you want to travel to.
- **Natural scenic beauty**: a beautiful landscape or view characterised by trees, flowers, hills and other natural things.
- **Pristine**: picture perfect.

ZIM

25. Describe someone who is a good parent.

You should say:

- Who the person is.
- How you know him/her.
- What the person do.
- Why you think he/she is good.

Sample

Speaking of a role model in parenting, I would like to talk about my best friend's father.

He is working as a doctor and due to his **tight working schedule**, I don't have many chances to talk to him, even though I come over his house on a frequent basis. However, I still know him very well through stories told by my best friend. Also, her **well-educated** manner proves to me that he has done a good job raising her up. Vietnamese parents are known to be "tiger parents", but he should be considered as an exception. He respects his daughter's decisions and never forces her to do things that are not at her will. Unlike other doctors, he always encourages her to pursue her dream to be a singer rather than follow the family line of work in the medical field. Even when she causes trouble and receives bad grades at school, she isn't afraid to tell her father because she knows that he is more than a parent to her, he is truly a friend who can give her good advice and help her find possible ways of improving herself.

You know, being a doctor isn't just **a nine to five job**, he has to work on a **night shift** several times a week, but he still managed to take good care of his child. He is good at **maintaining a work-life balance**. He allocates the whole weekend apart from work and social life to spend time with his family where he often teaches his daughter cooking and survival skills. Sometimes he takes her to the cinema to watch the latest blockbusters so that they can have a discussion on movies and related life situations. All in all, he is the type of parent that I wish to become in the future.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Tight working schedule**: has to work frequently with long hours.
- **Well-educated**: has good knowledge and understanding from schooling.
- **A nine to five job**: a job that lasts from 9am to 5pm. Full-time work.
- **A night shift**: working at night.
- **Maintain a work-life balance**: working whilst having and enjoying your free time.

26. Describe a rule at your school that you agree or disagree with.

You should say:

- What the rule is;
- What will happen when students break the rule;
- Why school makes the rule;
- Why you agree or not.

Sample

Vietnamese high school is known for imposing a lot of strict rules on students, and mine is not an exception.

There is one rule in my school I can't stand. This is that male and female students are not allowed to be seen together, or sit next to each other, even in class or during break time. If we violate the rule, or if we are caught standing near a student of a different gender, we will receive a warning from the **supervisor.** If it continues, we can be temporarily expelled from school for three days to a week. I know that there is a reason behind this. Rumor is that some couples skipped school to secretly hang out, and thus failed to pass the university entrance exam. The **principal** is concerned that the teenagers may fall in love and neglect their studies, so this rule is to limit the interaction between boys and girls in order not to develop an intimate relationship. However, I think that it has gone too far. I do agree that the main duty of students is to study, but it is not wrong for us, boys and girls, to spend time together. We are old enough not to let our study be interfered. Not to mention that, sometimes, it's just pure friendship. Each gender has different strengths and weaknesses, for example boys are often good at Maths and Physics while girls excel at Literature and languages. So, if we learn together, we can actually help each other to learn better.

To me, this separation is nonsense and meaningless. It not only prevents us from enjoying our high school years to the fullest but also **causes conflicts** between students and the school. The only way I believe it to be helpful to students' learning is to show them the consequences of poor learning performance and educate them in taking advantage of having friends of mixed genders.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Supervisor**: Manager or caregiver. Usually in the work place.
- **Principal**: The head of the school.
- **Cause conflicts**: Make disagreements arise.

27. Describe an achievement that you are proud of.

You should say:

- What you do;
- When, where, and how you do it;
- How difficult it is;
- Why you are proud of it.

Sample

I would like to talk about one of my personal achievements that I take pride in, and that is passing my university entrance examination. This exam is known to be nerve-wracking and challenging, especially when you wish to attend the **prestigious** schools in town.

To be honest, back in high school, I wasn't much of a diligent student. I had no appreciation of hard work and self-improvement. Higher education wasn't something I aimed at, all I wished for was to graduate from high school. But in my senior year, I had a chance to study with a dedicated Literature teacher. The messages that she delivered in each lesson were **mind-opening** and **thought-provoking**, activating my desire for self-betterment. At the same time, I harbored my hope of being a teacher. I know that it was not easy for a student with bad academic results like me to get into the University of Education, but when I set my heart on something, I will go to great lengths to attain it. The exam included three core subjects, namely Maths, Literature and English. Languages were my forte, but Maths was not my thing. I started to study around the clock and took an active role in learning by doing extra algebra exercises and seeking help from my teachers with any questions that arose. There were times when I was exhausted and **disheartened**, but the encouragements from my teachers were helpful in keeping me motivated.

Finally, the hard work paid off. I was over the moon when informed to be accepted to that university. I was proud of myself for the determination and effort it took to step out of my comfort zone and make my dream come true.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Prestigious**: inspiring respect and admiration; having high status.
- **Mind-opening**: seeing something in a new way.
- **Thought-provoking**: makes you think about something.
- **Disheartened**: cause (someone) to lose determination or confidence.

ZIM

28. Describe a car journey you went on.

You should say:

- Where did you go;
- What did you do there;
- Who you went there with;
- Why you wanted to go there for a car journey;
- How you feel about it.

Sample

Today I would like to share with you a story about a car journey that I took part in.

It was about three years ago, when I had just graduated from university. In fact, it was in the middle of summer vacation, so my best friend and I decided to go on a trip to Nha Trang; **a coastal city** on the South-Central Coast of Vietnam. We decided to **set out** for this city very early in the morning, as it is far from my hometown. I knew that we faced **a long drive** ahead, so it would be safer to travel by car, rather than by motorbike.

After 5 hours driving, we arrived at our **destination**. We were amazed to see beautiful beaches with fine and clean sand, as well as clear ocean water with mild temperatures. We had a lot of activities to do at the time, including eating out at night and swimming near the beaches. Also, we stayed for three nights with my uncle's family and helped them with their regular tasks before setting off home on the last day.

At first, I was under the impression that this trip would be kind of boring as didn't have many friends to go with me in this trip. However, it turned out to be an amazing one, and it helped us learn more about the countryside and the way of life of those who live there. If I have opportunities in the future, I'd love to make more trips like that.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **A coastal city**: a city by the sea.
- **Set out**: the moment you go on a journey.
- **A long drive**: driving to somewhere far away.
- **Destination**: a place you intend to travel to.

29. Describe something you bought recently that made you happy.

You should say:

- What it is.
- When and where you bought it.
- How it was used/what is was used for.
- Why it made you happy.

Sample

Today I would like to talk to you about my new laptop. At the time, it made me really satisfied because of its **high performance**.

It was about 3 years ago, when I was a senior student in my university. At that time, I really needed to **purchase** a new laptop as soon as possible in order to do homework and assignments for my thesis, so I asked a lot of people about which **brand** I should buy. After considering everything, I decided to buy a laptop from the DELL brand shop.

When it comes to how I use this laptop, besides doing homework and assignments, I like watching movies as well as playing games for **recreational purposes**, which have brought me a sense of fun until now.

There are so many reasons why I really love this laptop. Firstly, I bought it for a reasonable price. Unlike other famous laptop brands like ASUS and Lenovo, which usually **cost an arm and a leg**, this DELL laptop is suitable for people who are **not well-off** like me. Besides that, when using this laptop, I can ease my mind by doing a range of recreational activities after a long day at school and **get away from daily routine**. In the future, I would like to keep this laptop as long as possible as I am extremely happy to own it.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **high performance:** works to a high standard.
- **purchase:** buy
- **brand:** a logo or name of a company attached to the product it sells.
- **recreational purposes:** used for fun and free time.
- **cost an arm and a leg:** costs a lot of money.
- **not well-off:** don't have a lot of money.
- **get away from daily routine:** have time away from usual daily life.

30. Describe a dream house or apartment you want to live in.

You should say:

- Where it is
- What your dream home is like
- Why you like this dream home
- What you would do to get it.

Sample

Today I'm going to talk about my vision of an ideal home that I want to live in in the future.

My long-term goal is to be able to settle down in one of the **villas** in District 7, or any other **upscale neighborhood** in HCMC. This is because I don't want to **settle** for anything less when it comes to housing, and District 7 has good access to all kinds of **infrastructure facilities**, such as good international schools for my children, good hospitals, good roads and many shopping centers.

In this area, there is a 3-storey villa with a big garden, and it also has a small pond next to a big tree, which I would really love to have. I'll plant different types of trees and maybe have a small pond for some fish as well. I love pets, so I'll definitely keep some cats and dogs, and they can play around in the garden area. As for the **interior**, to give the space a modern style, I'll have it painted in bright colors like yellow and white – which are my personal favorites and hang up paintings from local artists as well as some **pot plants** around the home.

Part of the reason why I want to live in a villa is because I want to have a big family. I'll definitely bring my parents to live here with me and my wife, and together we'll bring up my future children. This villa is going to be the symbol of my hard work and I firmly believe that if I focus on this goal, I can make it a reality.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **villas**: Large, luxurious houses.
- **upscale neighborhood**: an area with expensive and luxurious housing.
- **settle**: decide to stay in a place.
- **infrastructure facilities**: good facilities, roads and public services.
- **interior**: the inside design.
- **pot plants**: plants for decoration.

31. Describe an activity you do to keep fit.

You should say:

- What you do.
- When and where you usually do it.
- How you do it.
- Why it can keep you fit.

Sample

Today I would like to talk about jogging; my favourite activity that I usually do to **stay healthy**. It's a kind of running at a slow or leisurely pace that helps to **build up your physical fitness**.

I much prefer to go jogging in open spaces, like parks or lakesides, because you can enjoy fresh air and watch people doing various types of **physical activity** such as running, aerobic exercises or playing badminton. I normally go jogging in the morning with my close friend **on a daily basis** for about 30 minutes to 1 hour in order to keep fit.

There are many reasons why it can keep me fit. Firstly, this activity is a good way to **gain an attractive appearance** and **keep in good shape**, which is really beneficial to my health. Also, we can **improve our immune system** and **lower the risks of modern diseases**, like diabetes or obesity, by jogging regularly. Unlike other forms of exercise, jogging is quite easy to do and it allows me to observe people and things as I pass by. The second important reason is that doing this activity also allows me to ease my mind and get away from daily routine, the effects of which are limitless.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **stay healthy**: to have and maintain good health.
- **build up your physical fitness**: increase your bodily strength and physical abilities.
- **physical activity**: an activity with the body.
- **on a daily basis**: every day.
- **gain attractive appearance**: achieve a good or appealing look.
- **keep in good shape**: stay physically fit.
- **improve our immune system**: improve one's ability to fight sickness.
- **lower the risks of modern diseases**: make it less likely that you will get sick.

32. Describe a science subject you learned in your school.

You should say:

- What do you learn about
- How about the teacher
- What do you think of the teacher
- How you feel about it.

Sample

There were many science subjects that I used to learn a long time ago, but today I would like to talk about Biology, which was one of the subjects that I had a chance to learn at school.

It was about 6 years ago, when I just entered high school. It was right at the beginning of the term, and I was terribly busy studying many subjects on a weekly basis. One of these subjects was Biology because it was one of many **mandatory subjects** that I had to study. At that time, my classmates and I studied this subject with a teacher whose name was Linh. She was an experienced and **highly respected teacher** in my school.

At first, I was under the impression that Biology in high school was really complicated, as in the first lessons I couldn't even understand what my teacher taught us in class, and I even suffered from stress and bad performance in mid-term tests. However, I never surrendered and kept trying day by day, so it gradually became easier. Finally, I **passed with flying colors** at the end of the term thanks to her **sound advice** about how to study this subject more effectively. Biology would not have been easy to pass if we did not have this level of determination and perseverance when learning it.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **mandatory subjects**: subjects that you must sit.
- **highly respected teacher**: a teacher with a good reputation.
- **pass with flying colors**: pass with a high score.
- **sound advice**: advice that is accurate and helpful.

33. Describe a difficult decision that you once made

You should say:

- What the decision was
- How you made your decision
- What the results of the decision were
- Why it was difficult to make.

Sample

I have made many difficult decisions in my life, but today I would like to talk about the decision of choosing which university to study at.

It was about 2 years ago, when I graduated from high school. At that time, I was terribly busy as I had to prepare the application form for the university entrance exam. I had to make an important but difficult decision.

At that time, I was **at a crossroads**, where I had to decide which university to apply for. My interest was in English language, which was taught in many separate universities. Fortunately, my older brother, who graduated from the University of Pedagogy, gave me some **sound advice**. Having **weighed up the pros and cons** of each school, he encouraged me to choose the university specialising in my subject. Finally, I applied for this school after thinking carefully about all the options.

At present, I feel so satisfied with the **learning environment** of this university that I am always thankful for my decision as well as my brother's advice. Without his guidance, I probably wouldn't be as content with my university life as I am.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **at a crossroads**: at a time where you must make a decision
- **sound advice**: advice that is accurate and helpful.
- **weighed up the pros and cons**: thought about the positive and negative aspects of something.
- **learning environment**: somewhere to learn like a school, library or university.

34. Describe a garden/park you have visited

You should say:

- Where it was
- What it looked like
- What you did there
- Why you liked it there.

Sample

Today I would like to talk about Tao Dan Park, which is one of the most well-known public parks in Ho Chi Minh City, and it is also the place that I usually visit.

Tao Dan Park is a public park located **in the heart of the city**, and it is most commonly known for many beautiful flowers as well as big trees, which gives you a sense of peace and **tranquility** whilst being able to do some physical activities, like jogging or walking.

I have become a frequent guest there and usually go on the weekend. My favorite activities in this park are playing badminton and going jogging with some of my friends, if they have free time, or simply sitting on the bench and enjoying the view. Despite being popular, this park is still able to maintain a quiet and soft **atmosphere**. Also, other guests there are usually quite respectful and generally don't disturb other people by talking or laughing too loudly.

It's rare to find a place like this in Ho Chi Minh and I always recommend it to my friends when they need a break from the busy city life.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **in the heart of the city**: the center of the city
- **tranquility**: peaceful
- **atmosphere**: the feeling or mood of a place, situation, or work of art.

35. Describe an occasion where somebody gave you positive suggestions.

You should say:

- When you received
- Who gave you the suggestions
- What you did
- Why the suggestions were positive/how you felt.

Sample

Today I would like to talk about an occasion that I received positive suggestions from my friend about how to overcome **procrastination**.

It was about 3 years ago, when I was a senior student in my university. It was right before my **dissertation**. I used to have a serious procrastination problem as my **word document** was still blank even though it was only a month before the due date. In fact, I was not worried at all because I was overconfident that I would eventually complete it no matter what happened. If this went on, I would probably have failed my dissertation.

Fortunately, my best friend that was in the same group as me (something I found really frustrating) did not give up on me. He suggested that we could divide the dissertation into small projects and **set a deadline** for each one. I did exactly what he advised and submitted my work successfully. As a result, I graduated with flying colors. Now that I work, I also follow this procedure, which turned out to be quite useful. I feel grateful to his suggestion as, without it, my life would have followed a different path and it would not be a better one.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **procrastination**: wasting time when you have work to do.
- **dissertation**: final assignment in a degree course.
- **word document**: a file for a word processing program e.g Microsoft Word.
- **set a deadline**: the latest time to submit the task.

36. Describe an occasion when you helped a person.

You should say:

- What the situation was
- Who you helped
- How you helped
- How you felt after giving help.

Sample

There are many times I ask myself what I have to do to be able to provide support for others. However, when I got a thank you from a stranger, a little boy, I realised helping was such a simple thing to do. I helped him without even knowing it.

I can't recall the exact time and date. **To the best of my recollection**, I had a day off work, and I saw a boy selling balloons and other toys at a street fair. He looked at the crowd in **despair**, since no one showed any interest in his stuff. I went over to him and I saw his eyes **light up**. I bought a few toys and asked him some questions. From his answers, I knew that he was **having a hard time**, which can drive anyone to tears. His mother was in shock after his father had walked out on the family **out of the blue**. She could not work anymore due to her **state of mind**. He had to earn money for him, his mother and his younger sister to live.

When I got back from holiday, I took a picture of the toys and posted it on my Facebook page with a caption about the boy's story. I also named the street where he was selling and called on my friends to buy his stuff if possible. It's hard to imagine the effect of a social networking site like Facebook. However, tons of people came to buy his stuff and offer him help. After some months, I returned to visit him. He and his mother showed me great appreciation and said that my simple action had changed their life. They couldn't have asked for more, and I couldn't be happier.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **To the best of my recollection**: trying to remember something to the best of your ability.
- **despair**: the complete loss or absence of hope.
- **light up**: look amazed and happy.
- **having a hard time**: a time of difficulty.
- **out of the blue**: from nowhere.
- **state of mind:** mental health and wellbeing.

37. Describe a traditional product in your country.

You should say:

- What it is;
- When was the first time you tried it;
- How to make it;
- How you like it.

Sample

I'd love to talk about rice, the most important agricultural plant in my country.

Ever since I was in my early elementary years, the rice plant has appeared in almost every subject, from literature to natural science to geography. And even in real life, the rice plant can be spotted all across the countryside around Vietnam.

It never ceases to amaze me how such a simple plant could support a whole nation's economy. Up to this day, millions of Vietnamese families are still dependent on the cultivation of rice to **make ends meet**. And the fact that Vietnam has become one of the world's leading rice exporters is more solid proof of the relevance of this plant in my country. Besides this, rice has been an indispensable part of the main meal of most families for centuries and children practice the habit of eating rice from a very young age, and as for the older generation, they **cannot go a day without** rice in some form or another.

Over thousands of years, the rice plant has played a really important role in Vietnamese culture and many traditions and ceremonies originate from the farmers hopes for an **abundant crop**, and many of these traditions are considered important established customs to foreign visitors. I think that the rice plant has become one of the greatest symbols for the Vietnamese spirit and deserves large appreciation from all generations.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Never cease to amaze me**: always amazes me.
- **Make ends meet**: make enough money to support yourself abd your family.
- **Go a day without something**: don't have something for a day.
- **An abundant crop**: a large harvest from a crop of plants.

38. Describe a leisure facility (cinema, theater, sports center) you would like to have in your home town.

You should say:

- What it is;
- Why you would like to have this facility in your home town;
- When will you go there;
- How the facility changes your life;
- How you felt about it.

Sample

So, today I am going to talk about an outstanding swimming pool called, the Four Seasons, which attracts around a thousand people a day and which many consider to be the most popular pool in the city.

Four Seasons is an indoor public pool located in my local **sports complex**. The reason why the pool is called Four Seasons is because it's a heated pool and people can go there to enjoy the warm water all year round.

As you may know, swimming is now becoming quite a popular exercise and **recreational activity** for people of all ages in Ho Chi Minh city, and I also took swimming lessons through my time at school. However, it was not until about a year ago that I started to pay regular visits to this pool. I am grateful to my best friend for introducing me to this wonderful place.

I think that Four Seasons is such a popular place for several reasons. Firstly, safety is their highest priority, and there's always a well-trained lifeguard there to enforce the pool safety rules and **perform any water rescues** if necessary. Secondly, the quality of the facilities is excellent. The pool is nicely heated and regularly **sanitised**. There are also clean changing rooms with showers and big lockers for all your clothes and other belongings. I think that all of this creates the best experience for the people that go there to swim. I believe that the Four Seasons swimming pool totally deserves its great reputation.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Sports complex**: An area for sports activities.
- **Recreational activity**: Something you do in your free time, usually for pleasure.
- **Perform any water rescues**: help someone who is unable to swim to safety.
- **Sanitised**: Made clean.

39. Describe a place people can listen to music. (such as a theatre or a music hall)

You should say:

- Where it is;
- What kind of music is performed there;
- What types of people go there;
- Why people go there;
- How you feel about it.

Sample

There are plenty of places that people living in my city could visit in order to be entertained by listening to music. Amongst them, I prefer Hoa Binh performing arts center; the most popular one.

Hoa Binh performing arts center is located in Ho Chi Minh City, near the city centre and I happened to have a chance to visit there a year ago. As far as I recall, the performing arts center was shaped like a circle in order to improve the acoustics.

In the theater, all sorts of performances take turns to be carried out. And many **influential orchestras** and **troupes** from home and abroad have performed there. When coming to this theater, you get a chance to listen to various **genres** of music, ranging from pop and rock music to folk songs free of charge. A lot of professional musicians and singers have their music performances there and I'm cvonstantly having my mind blown by how talented and skillful the artists are.

The theater is also open to visitors for sightseeing. I strongly recommend you to visit there. Even if you are not to attend a play or a concert, it’s still worth going to the theater to appreciate its unique design or see the art exhibitions displayed there.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **happened to**: came across an oppertunity.
- **influential orchestras and troupes**: popular and respected musical and theatre groups.
- **genre:** a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterised by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.

40. Describe a piece of furniture you like. (in your home)

You should say:

- What kind of furniture it is;
- What it looks like;
- Who bought it;
- What the furniture are made of;
- Why you like the furniture.

Sample

I'm going to describe my **night lamp**, which my father gave me when I had to leave home for studying.

It is a medium-sized plastic lamp, maybe twice or three times the size of a teddy bear. It is **shaped** like a panda, with the socket hidden at the bottom of the lamp and the switch seated neatly on its head. There's a **battery holder** beside the **socket**, so you can always use the battery if you cannot find an outside electrical socket to plug it in.

It was the very first time I'd been given a **night light**. I'd never used this type of lamp before, so I felt really excited and grateful upon receiving it. My father told me that this lamp could help me sleep better. And you know what, it actually worked! The lamp gives out a nice cozy yellow light, and I am able to really **sleep soundly** with it on.

I've been sleeping with this lamp beside my bed every night since the day I received it, and this cute little thing is one of my treasures. I plan to have it with me for a long time, so I'm trying to keep it in the best possible condition.

I really like my night lamp for two reasons, firstly that is a gift which represents for my father's love for me and I owe him a lot of gratitude. Secondly, **it also offers me a feeling of** warmth and comfort when having it in my room.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Night lamp**: A bed-side lamp to use at night.
- **to be shaped**: in the shape of.
- **battery holder**: A holder for a battery.
- **socket**: A place to plug in electronics and get electricity.
- **sleep soundly**: sleep well.
- **it also offers me a feeling of**: makes me feel a certain way.

ZIM

41. Describe an important letter you received.

You should say:

- Who sent the letter;
- What it is about;
- Why it is important;
- How you feel about it.

Sample

I'm going to talk about the time when I received the official notification of my scholarship to join an exchange program in Japan. It was about three years ago. It feels like a long time ago but I can still remember the day quite **vividly**.

At that time, I was a sophomore at university and one day I came across an advertisement for a two-month **cultural exchange program** in Japan for students from Southeast Asia. I was really eager to apply for this program. Luckily my application was accepted and I was also **nominated** for a scholarship.

So, about 2 months later, I received the letter from the Scholarship Committee informing me that I had been chosen to receive a full scholarship which would cover all kinds of fees and living expenses for me during the program. I think **my heart skipped a beat** and I screamed out loud when I saw the word "Congratulations" in that email. I was really proud of myself to be chosen from hundreds of candidates to win this scholarship.

It was definitely the best news of the year. If I hadn't won the scholarship, my living expenses would have been such a heavy **financial burden** for my parents, but thanks to the generous grants that I received, I could really enjoy my time in Japan without worrying about the money. To this day I still keep this lucky email in my inbox to remind me of that special occasion.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **vividly**: in a way that produces powerful feelings or strong, clear images in the mind.
- **cultural exchange program**: studying at a different university in another country as part of your university program.
- **nominated**: Placed on a list to win a prize.
- **my heart skipped a beat**: Intense excitement that shocks you.
- **financial burden**: Something that is very expensive.

42. Describe an exciting book you have read.

You should say:

- When you read it;
- What type/kind of book it is;
- What it is about;
- Why you read it /Why it is exciting.

Sample

I would like to tell you about a book called Harry Potter, a **fantasy novel**, written by the British author J. K. Rowling. It's one that I can re-read **time and time again**.

The book describes the adventure and life of a young wizard named Harry Potter and his two best friends, Ron and Hermione. Harry has to struggle to kill the Dark wizard Lord Voldemort, whose aim is to become immortal and destroy all those who stand in the way of his mission to rule the world.

The reason why this book **comes to mind** is that it is a reminder of my childhood. It was a gift from my mother to reward my achievement at school. Up until now, I can still remember clearly how fascinated I was when I received it.

Harry Potter will always be on my to-read list for a number of reasons. Firstly, I have always been a great admirer of science fiction books so I love the way that the author describes the whole magical world with the magic school, Hogwarts, and the flying brooms. Secondly, reading this book not only helps me to relax after a long day of work or study but also cheers me up whenever I am feeling **blue**.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **fantasy novel**: a fiction book set in a different reality.
- **time and time again**: something that keeps happening.
- **comes to mind**: something that I think about.
- **blue**: sad.

43. Describe an interesting person from another country.

You should say:

- Who this person is;
- How you know this person;
- What this person does;
- Why this person is interesting.

Sample

Today I'm going to tell you about an interesting person from another country that I really admire and respect. I am currently studying English at ZIM English center and there are a lot of foreign teachers who are very kind, **well-mannered** and friendly**.** Among them, I would pick Mr. Vincent as the loveliest one I have met.

Mr. Vincent comes from America, the most developed country in the world, and he has lived in Vietnam for 2 years. He has acquired a reputation as a profound and dedicated teacher at my English school, I usually find him leaving for work early and getting home late. He first applied to Zim a year ago and since then he has **endeared himself to** everybody in the school.

What I find most appealing about him is that he's so polite and he **has really good manners**. He uses the word "thank you" even on the slightest occasion. For instance, I've noticed that whenever we eat at a restaurant, he will thank the waiters whenever they bring a dish to the table. And another example would be that every time he gets off a bus, he will always say thank you to the driver, which a lot of people probably think isn't necessary, but I'm sure the waiters and bus drivers really appreciate it. Whenever his students ask him to help them with difficult homework, he never complains or shows any **hesitation**. And due to this, he always **maintains a good reputation** thanks to his politeness.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Endeared himself to**: liked and appreciated by.
- **Have good manners**: Polite and thoughtful character.
- **Hesitation**: pause before saying or doing something, especially through uncertainty.
- **Maintain a good reputation**: keep good beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something

44. Describe a businessman that you admire.

You should say:

- Who his person is;
- How you got to know this person;
- What this person does;
- How you think of this person.

Sample

Today I'm going to tell you about a businessman that I really admire and respect. I live in a beautiful and peaceful street and most of my neighbors are working for companies or running their own enterprises**.** Among them, I would pick Mr. Vincent as the most admirable businessman I have ever met.

Mr. Vincent is 30 years old and he established his first company when he was only 26. His company trades medical equipment, and it's name is Viet Sun. He has acquired a **reputation** as a **profound** and **dedicated** person to his work, I usually find him leaving for work early and getting home late. Even on weekends, instead of hanging out with friends, he is still glued to his computer screen.

Despite being older than me by nearly 10 years but he looks really young and is always full of energy. Few people have the great passion and relevant skills to pursue to their goals. Mr. Vincent is one of those who could achieve his dream by himself at the age of 26, and this is what I find most appealing about him.

Another of his lovely traits is definitely his wise advice. Therefore, whenever I feel **discouraged**, I will seek his advice**.** I have learnt many useful things from him, not only in everyday things, but also in **attitudes to life.**

To me, he is not just a normal businessman, but a person whom I can share things with and learn many things from. I really **owe a lot of gratitude** to him.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **reputation**: the beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something
- **profound**: having or showing great knowledge or insight.
- **dedicated**: devoted to a task or purpose; having single-minded loyalty or integrity.
- **attitudes to life**: mentality in daily life.
- **discouraged**: having lost confidence or enthusiasm; disheartened.

45. Describe an experience that you taught a friend or a relative.

You should say:

- When it happened and what it was;
- Who was taught by you;
- Why you taught someone something;
- How difficult it was for you.

Sample

The experience I am going to tell you about is that I taught my mother how to use Facebook to send messages and keep in touch with people. My mother is an old lady marching towards her 50s. She did not attend college but went to work directly after high school, which was quite common in her era. Ever since marriage, the focus of her life has been the family. She made sure my father and I eat well and dress well, and we have a nice clean house too.

Thus she did not have much time to pay attention to the development of technology and often felt puzzled facing all those **high-tech devices** like smart-phones, laptops and smart televisions.

Last year, my mother asked me whether I knew how to post statuses and pictures through Facebook since her friends were getting used to up-to-date technology and texting due to apps like Facebook or Viber became pretty popular. I said of course and patiently showed her how to open the app, how to log in and use all the functions of the app. She was so careful that she even wrote down all the procedures. After several practice attempts, she could do this by herself. I saw a big smile appear on her face.

I didn't find it difficult to teach a woman like my mother to exploit modern **gadgets,** and using them allowed her to catch up with her friends and also what's happening in the world.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **high-tech devices**: employing, requiring, or involved in high technology.
- **gadgets**: a small mechanical or electronic device or tool, especially an ingenious or novel one.

46. Describe an interesting place that few tourists visit.

You should say:

- Where it is;
- When you went there;
- What you can see there;
- Why there is a few people to go.

Sample

To be honest, it's really hard to think about a place which is interesting and that few people know about. And today I will talk about one of my favorite restaurants. It is actually in the suburbs of my hometown. You know, this restaurant doesn't even have a name. We always call it "Năm Grandma" because the owner as well as the chef is an old grandma, whose name is Năm and she only offers lunch.

The restaurant is on a busy street and very near to a school. It is quite a small and **hectic** place. From the outside, the restaurant doesn't look very impressive and even a little bit poor. Inside there are lots of old square wooden tables, each with about four chairs around them.

This restaurant has several dishes, and you do not need to order from the menu, just pick up what you want from the kitchen. Each of them is so delicious to me. If you go there too late, you won't get the most popular one. Whenever I was free, I'd go there with my friends or family to enjoy my favorite dishes.

You know, even though it is a small restaurant, the delicious food made everyone who has been there fall in love with it. In my mind, it should be the best restaurant in the world. However, few people know it, maybe because it didn't have a name and you know, my hometown is a small city, so, it cannot be a famous place.

Vocabulary highlights:

hectic: full of constant activity.

47. Describe something you bought according to an advertisement you saw.
You should say:

- What it is;
- When and where you see the advertisement;
- Why you want to buy it;
- How you feel about it.

Sample

About a couple of months ago I saw an advertisement on the internet for a special pair of running shoes. It was the picture that caught my attention first because the shoes looked very different from normal running shoes.

They were made from a special material and had a **synthetic sole** grafted onto the body so that they fit like a glove on my foot. The bottom was quite similar to a normal running shoe so that it **gripped well** and provided protection for your feet.

Speaking of the advertisement, there was also a video that was maybe 3 or 4 minutes long and showed a runner going up a rocky hill. The video explained how these running shoes allowed the runner to feel more of the ground underneath his feet and grip better because of the flexing motion of the bottom of the shoes.

It was more an informative ad than anything arty or creative, but it made me want to buy the shoes because I hadn't seen them before and I wanted to try them, so I ordered a pair in my size. I've tried them out a couple of times so far and they seem really good. They cost me just a little bit more than some of the normal running shoes, but I think they're worth the extra money. The running experience is quite different from normal , personally, I prefer it.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **synthetic sole**: the bottom of a shoe, made by chemical synthesis, especially to imitate a natural product.
- **to be gripped well:** maintain a firm contact, especially by friction.

48. Describe a time you felt happy that you used your cellphone.

You should say:

- What you do;
- When, where you do it;
- Who you do it with;
- Why you felt happy using your cell phone.

Sample

I'd like to share with you an unforgettable experience: when my mother gave me a smart phone.

It was when I took an entrance examination successfully which **marked a significant milestone** in my life. Therefore, in order to reward my achievement in studying, my mother gave me an Iphone, the most popular smart phone. Everyone across the globe wants to have it.

At that time, I can clearly remember how fascinated I was when I received it. I spent most of my time discovering how to use it and it helped me communicate with my friends, family members and teachers. It gets me connected with the people I care about. I use the internet on my cell phone, check my emails, update my blog, track the statistics of my website, send and receive SMS, play games, listen to music and take pictures, then share them on my Facebook and twitter profiles. Besides these I do lots of other things on my cell phone including using important apps, reading e-books, using it as a modem to use the internet on my PC. I could not imagine how my life would be without my smart phone.

I was thankful for the mobile phone that my mother gave me. Firstly, my productivity was significantly improved, I was surprised at how much I revised for my exams with my smart phone. More importantly, I must say that my life was less boring with this **amusement and recreational device** that lets me play games and listen to music. Finally, I can update my social networking profiles and **get updates from** my friends right from my cell phone.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **marked a significant milestone**: an important and memorable event.
- **bear in mind**: keep in my mind.
- **amusement and recreational device**: a gadget used for entertainment.

49. Describe a person who knows a lot/is knowledgeable.

You should say:

- Who the person is;
- What the person do;
- What kinds of things he knows;
- What you learn from him/her.

Sample

To '**think outside of the box'** is always the term that comes to mind whenever a problem arises and its difficult to find a solution. There is one person on this planet though who always surprises me with his cleverness and ability to come up with a solution to even some of the toughest problems. His name is Nam and he's my older brother.

My mother always told us that even though we're brothers and we have **a close–knit relationship**, we're still as different as two people could possibly be. I'm quite an active person and have a tendency to make very quick decisions, while my brother is extremely calm and usually solves problems in a **level-headed** kind of way. It is for this reason that he has been a kind of savior to me on a number of occasions.

There is a time that I consider an important landmark in my life, which was when I took the entrance exam to university. And, similarly to my mother, I suffer from **hypotension** which is low blood pressure and sometimes causes dizziness when I'm hungry or tired. In certain circumstances, I just need the sugar from a couple of candy bars to recover, but actually I'm quite an **absent-minded** person so I usually forget to carry any with me. On that day, when the start of the examination was getting nearer, I was so nervous that I couldn't think clearly and my hands had begun to shake. All of a sudden, I found some tiny chocolate bars in my pocket, and they saved my life! In the end, it turned out that my brother remembered to put some in my pocket for me in order to avoid this situation. He was so thoughtful and smart to do such a thing!

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Think outside of the box**: Think in a different way; from a new perspective.
- **A close-knit relationship**: a close and long relationship.
- **Level-headed**: a decision made in sound mind.
- **Hypotension**: abnormally low blood pressure.
- **Absent-minded**: not paying attention.

ZIM

50. Describe an advertisement you have seen recently.

You should say:

- When and where you saw it;
- What kind of advertisement it was;
- What the contents of the advertisements were;
- How you felt about it.

Sample

I'm going to talk about an advertisement for Blue Electronics, which is one of the biggest electronics brands in Vietnam. I've seen its advertisements everywhere, on TV commercials and even on social media networks like Facebook and Instagram.

The advertisement shows a video of people dressed as blue household appliances, smiling, staring creepily at the screen and dancing spontaneously to a really annoying yet catchy tune. I think the aim of this ad is to create a big impression on the audience and to make the products seem more **appealing** to them. I also think they are trying to **traumatise** the audience so that whenever they hear that tune, they will think of Blue Electronics. I think the advert is interesting because the company is deliberately trying to influence and attract people's attention, and they do this by trying to present the household appliances as something special, and kind of like a useful friend for everyone I guess. I think older people will probably not enjoy these kinds of advertisements because older people usually prefer more informative, serious kind of ads, whereas the younger generation seems to be crazier about this kind of advertisement, as I think they are more open and able to perceive more innovative and hilarious ideas.

Vocabulary highlights:

- **Appealing**: attractive or interesting.
- **Traumatise**: subject to lasting shock as a result of an emotionally disturbing experience or physical injury.